Amateur Radio Newsline™ Report 1391 – April 8, 2004

Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1391 with a release date of Friday, April 9th, 2004 to follow in 5-4-3-2-1.

The following is a Q-S-T. It's ham radio versus BPL in upstate New York. Hear the racket for yourself on Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1391 coming your way right now.

(Billboard Cart Here)

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THE BPL FIFGHT: HAM RADIO VS. BPL IN PENN YAN N.Y.

If you have been wondering what Broadband over Powerline interference will do to your ability to communicate on the high frequency bands, here is a very graphic illustration. Take a listen:

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Penn Yan NY Audio - BPL Noise
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That recording of the 15 meter phone band was recently made by Dave Hallidy, K2DH, operating mobile in Penn Yan, New York and posted to the Rochester VHF Society website. It was made the weekend of the CQ WPXSSB Contest using a Yaesu FT-100D transceiver, a Tarheel Screwdriver antenna and recorded at a time when the band was loaded end to end with high power contest stations. And while you cold detect a few of them, the majority were covered up by the BPL grudge.

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Penn Yan NY Audio With Signals Covered Up
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In an Internet posting Mark Hoffman, K2AXX, who is Chairman of Rochester group described it as frightening to hear. He encourages all ham radio clubs and other organizations to contributed to the ARRL BPL Defense Fund as a way of fighting this threat to the ham radio bands. (K0BC, K2AXX, K2DH, QCWA)

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THE BPL FIGHT: TIME TO GO TO COURT?

And Hoffman is not alone in his concern. Others on the Internet are circulating a more drastic approach. Some hams advocate taking the matter to court and try to have the interfering BPL providers charged with being a public nuisance or as a threat to our national security. (Various Internet Posts)

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ENFORCEMENT: UTILITY WARNED TO CLEAN UP RFI

An electric utility has been told for a second time to locate and fix an

interference problem to a ham radio operator. Amateur Radio Newsline's Bruce Tennant, K6ZW, has more:

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The FCC has sent a second letter to an energy provider warning it to clean up interference to a ham or face punitive action. The notice was sent directly to Wayne H. Brunetti who is Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Xcel Energy based I n Minneapolis, Minnesota.

In his letter the FCC tells Brunetti that the agency notified him back in December of 2003 that it has received complaints of harmful radio interference possibly caused by equipment operated by Xcel Energy. That this interference has been reported by a ham living in Wellington, Colorado and that Xcel had been given 60 days to let the FCC and the ham know what steps were being taken to resolve the problem.

The FCC says that while Xcel did comply with its directive to respond, but as of the date of the latest letter the harmful interference reported to its office still remains unresolved. So the FCC told Brunetti that the company had 30 days to let the regulatory agency know what action Xcel has taken, or intends to take, in order to identify and correct the source of these radio emissions if they are being caused by its equipment. If Xcel fails to comply it could face enforcement action.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Bruce Tennant, K6PZW, reporting.

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As we go to air there is no word if Xcel's Burnetti has responded to the FCC.
 (FCC, RAIN)

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THE BPL FIGHT: OPPOSITION GOES PUBLIC IN SOUTH AFRICA

BPL is also a big concern in South Africa and that nations national ham radio society has voiced its concern to the public about the introduction of Broadband over Powerline Communications in that nation. SARL -- the South African Radio League did this during the program "Technologic" which aired on Africa's D-S-T-V Business Channel.

Society president Graham Harlett, ZS6GJH, was interviewed at the National Amateur Radio Center. He said that the SARL is opposed to Power Line Communication because of its inherent interference to High Frequency radio communication. He noted that the interference is not limited only to frequencies used by Radio Amateurs. That it includes the military, civil emergency agencies and some broadcasting stations as well.

Harlett, says that extensive tests carried out in Europe, the USA and Japan has clearly shown this. A transmission line that carries power will become like an antenna at higher frequencies and render the high frequency spectrum unusable.

Harlett, who is a managing director of a South African consulting company voiced another concern as well.   One that has not really been talked about in

the United States. That of ingress to Broadband over Powerline systems from other radio spectrum users including hams. Harlett says that radio transmitters in close proximity to users of BPL are likely to cause interference to them because of the antenna effect of the long, unshielded powerlines.

Technologic was broadcast on Monday March 29th and has been repeated twice since its initial airdate. (Q-News)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: SOLVING HAM-SAT INTERFERENCE

Meantime, the subject of interference to ham radio satellite was one of the topics at the recent meeting of the IARU Region One VHF Managers held in Vienna. Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, reports:

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As a result of research performed by OZ1MY, it now been shown that QRM that is occurring to ham radio satellites. Its primarily but not exclusively to 145 MHz satellite uplinks and mainly occurs when the birds are flying over Africa and the Middle East.

According to AMSAT, IARU Region 1 has a Monitoring Service which has been active for some years but which has, up to now, concentrated on frequencies below 30 MHz. In view of the wide area of QRM that can be caused by satellites and their ability to relay signals across international borders, the monitoring team has now agreed to scrutinize the satellite subbands as well.

Right now, what is needed are regular reports detailing instances of interference to the ham-sats along with audio files to back up each claim. The audio files will enable more precise identification of accents and dialects of those heard interfering. Hopefully, this will be a first step in getting those causing the interference off the satellites and off the ham bands as well.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I’m Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, in Los Angeles.

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The IARU Region One Monitoring Service team is said to have good contacts which are used daily to remove intruders from the High Frequency bands. Hopefully they will be able to do the same on VHF and UHF as well. (AMSAT, Others)

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>From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline, heard on bulletin stations around the world including the N8JFA X-WARN Repeater serving Xenia Ohio.

(5 sec pause here)

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ENFORCEMENT: FCC INVESTIGATES "PERFECT FIT"

Back here in the United States, the GCC Communicator reports that the FCC has launched an investigation into mattress warmer switching power supplies manufactured by Perfect Fit Industries. According to CGC, these supplies were never Part 15 RFI tested
and have been shown to create large amounts of problems to radio reception. (CGC)

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CB NEWS: VK CB TELNET NODES ON THE AIR

Some interesting news about C-B -- Citizens Band radio -- down-under. Unlike the United States where C-B operation is hap-hazard with no structure, Australia has a CB Packet Radio System that rivals anything that ham radio has ever set up. And now, it is being linked over the Internet to C-B operations in other nations including many Europe. This is making it possible for Australian C-B'ers to connect with numerous other C-B stations throughout the world using radio and Telnet. Q-News Graham Kemp, VK4BB, has the nodes and the frequencies:

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AUS002 Warren reports in Australia there are so far several CB Packet Radio Nodes and BBS's. These are AU4BNE Node 27.225 Usb Brisbane Q'ld, AUS011 BBS 27.225 Usb Brisbane, AU6PER Node 476.950 Fm Perth W.A and AU6BBS BBS 476.950 Fm Perth.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, In Graham Kemp, VK4BB, of Q-News Australia.

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So if you are scanning the 11 meter Citizens Band and hear digital signals, now you know exactly what they are. (Q-News)

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RESCUE RADIO: NEW NYC ARES WEBSITE

Some good news out of the Big Apple. The Public Information Officer for New York City District ARES reports that the group has a new web site up and running. Among its features are links to each of the city's 5 borough ARES operations, a contact list of borough District Emergency Coordinators, a news page and much more.

Want to see it? You can. Its in cyberspace at www.aresnyc.org (K2VMR)

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RADIO LAW: CABLE MAKES DECENCY OFFER

The cable television industry says that it will provide free equipment to allow subscribers to block unwanted channels. This in reaction to efforts on Capitol Hill to curb indecent programming.

Robert Sachs, president of the National Cable and Telecommunications

Association, announced the plan at a recent gathering of cable industry executives. The offer is directed to about half the nation's 70.5 million cable subscribers who don't have cable boxes that can be programmed to block certain channels or programs.

The companies agreeing to the plan include the 10 largest in the country and reach 85 percent of all cable subscribers. (Published reports)

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RADIO ON THE MOVE: WWVA MAY LEAVE WEST VA

Famed AM broadcast station WWVA in Wheeling, West Virginia may soon be heading to a new QTH. This, as Clear Channel Communications confirms that the company has filed an application with the FCC to move long-time 1170 KHz Wheeling radio station out of the state of West Virginia.

According to a report in the Wheeling News-Register, Clear Channel Communications Wheeling Vice President Scott Miller said the company has submitted an application to move the radio station to Stow, Ohio. This is a town located just north of Akron. Miller said it has not been determined whether WWVA will actually be leaving Wheeling, and noted that approval of such applications are extensive.

Broadcast pioneer John Stroebel brought WWVA on the air on December 13th, 1926 using home built 50 watt transmitter set up in the basement of his Wheeling home. By 1929 WWVA had increased power to 5000 watts and became one of the most listened to stations in the East. And, for many years before Clear Channel Communications bought it, WWVA held the honor of being one of the last clear channel coast to coast broadcasters left in the United States. It also helped to make the city of Wheeling famous, worldwide. (Listener reports confirmed by NRCDXAS)

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HAMFESTS AND CONVENTIONS: VISALIA INTERNATIONAL DX CONVENTION

On the convention circuit, the 55th Annual International DX Convention sponsored this year by the Southern California DX Club will be held April 23 to the 25th. This is the worlds premiere gathering of hams interested in DX and DXing on any band from DC to light. A show that attracts attendees from Asia, Europe, Africa and Oceania as well as from across the United States.

Scheduled events include a contest forum, antenna forum, DX forum along with seminars for everyone from the newcomer to DXing to the seasoned pro. The top of the line manufacturers will be there on their own display midway where you can talk to the people who design and use the best of DX equipment made.

As in previous years, the venue is the Holiday Inn in the city of Visalia, California. For full details visit www.scdxc.org/visalia/ on the World Wide Web. (SCDXC)

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HAMVENTION 2004: AMSAT EVENTS

Two more special events timed to coincide with Hamvention 2004 to report this week. The Third Annual AMSAT "Pizza 'n' Suds" party will be held Thursday evening May 13th. Again this year the venue will be Marion's Pizza at 1320 North Fairfield Rd. The party will begin at 1830 and go until the last pizza is gone! Food will be ordered from the menu and drinks are available at the bar.

Also, the AMSAT Banquet will be held Friday evening at 1800. Location is the Amber Rose Restaurant at 1400 Valley St. in old north Dayton. As with past years the meal will be a buffet with a price of $25.00 per person. Reservations are required and the banquet is limited to 90 people maximum. Please contact Nancy Makley for reservations. Her e-mail is KC8GYW@amsat.org. (N8NUY)

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HAMVENTION 2004: MEDIA CREDENTIALS

Still with Hamvention 2004, this to members of the working press who are planning to cover the event for commercial television, radio, newspapers or magazines. Media credentials are available to those organizations planning to send reporters. Complete information and a downloadable electronic application are on line at www.hamvention.org. Just scroll down on the left side of the page and click on the word Media. When the page loads, click on the word Media Credentials and follow the instructions that appear. (Hamvention(r))

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BREAK 2

This is ham radio news for today’s radio amateur. From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline with links to the world from our only official website at www.arnewsline.org and being relayed by the volunteer services of the following radio amateur:

(5 sec pause here)

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WITH NEWSLINE: NEW SEATTLE ACCESS NUMBER

This note to listeners who get Newsline by telephone access from Seattle. Joybubbles, WB0RPA, tells us he has a new easy to remember number for that line. Its area code 206-333-6397. How is that easier to rember? Try it this way: 206-333-NEWS. And we thank WB0RPA for the information and for sponsoring the line. (WB0RPA)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: ECHO STILL NEEDS $48,000

Turning to ham radio in space, AMSAT reports that as of March 30th it has raised $61,988 of the $110,000 needed to launch the new Echo ham radio satellite. That leaves about $48,000 still needed before the current target launch date of this coming June 29th. Go to www.amsat.org to find out how to donate to this very worthy project. (AMSAT)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: PC-SAT 2 READY TO FLY

Also word that PCSAT 2 has passed its final outgassing tests putting it one step closer to launch. These outgassing tests are some of the most stringent in the space program. They are designed to protest crew members from fumes that might arise out of materials used to construct anything going into space.

Commercial manufacturers who spend millions of dollars to develop space safe materials might want to take a lesson from the hams. All the parts in PCSAT 2 are off-the-shelf ham radio items. The new bird uses Kantronics TNC's and Hamtronics transmitter and receiver boards that include all of the original plastic parts.

PCSAT 2 will go into orbit on the first shuttle when they return to flight next year. Additional information about the PCSAT 2 mission is available at http://www.ew.usna.edu/~bruninga/pcsat2.html (ANS, WB4APR)

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WORLDBEAT - URUNGA - UGANDA: NO IT WASN’T APRIL FOOLS

Turning to news from around the world we have a correction on a sound-alike from last week. No, it wasn’t an April Fools joke. Again, here’s Q-News Graham Kemp, VK4BB:

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Audio report only. Hear it in the audio newscast at www.arnewsline.org
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So how did this one happen? Here is a clue. Try typing Urunga into your spell checker and see what it spits out. This one simply got away in the wee hours of the morning. (Q-News)

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WORLDBEAT - HOLLAND: SKED CHANGES AT RADIO NETHERLANDS

This for Radio Netherlands listeners in North America. As of Sunday 4th April the station has dropped its 1200 UTC shortwave transmission on 11.675 MHz. Also, last week the station broadcast its morning program on shortwave at both 1100 and 1200 UTC due to the discrepancy in the starting dates for daylight saving time. From Sunday it will be on shortwave for one hour at 1100-1200 UTC on the afore mentioned 11.675 Mhz. (Radio Netherlands)

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WORLDBEAT - EUROPE: THE 2004 SIX METER MARATHON

The Rientola Radio Amateur Club, operators of station OH3AG is inviting hams world wide to participate into the first Global Six Meter Marathon. The objective of the contest is to work as many DXCC countries as possible between May 8th at 0000 UTC and August 8th at 2400 UTC, doing so on six meters band.

The results of this contest will be published during Tampere Six Meters Forum on August 14th when the Magic Band enthusiasts abroad will meet. You can follow this contest and get more information on-line at www.50mc.tk (RSGB)

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DX

In DX, F5NQL says that he has been receiving many QSLs for the 5V7C Togo Dxpedition, but he is not the QSL manager for this operation. The correct QSL manager is Franck Savoldi, F5TVG, whose address is PO Box 92, 94223 Charenton Cedex, France. F5NQL is the DX editor for the French magazine Megahertz. (RSGB)

On the air, SM1TDE will operate from Tanzania mainly on CW, RTTY and SSB. He will be signing his call portable 5H3 through the 18th of April. QSL as directed by the operator. (RSGB)

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THAT FINAL ITEM: HAM RADIO AND THE AMBER ALERTS REVISITED

And finally, an update to our story two weeks ago about AMBER Alerts. We mentioned that for the most part ham radio seemed to have little interest in this important public notification system designed to help find the victims of kidnappings. Now we learn of at least one Amateur Radio club that's at work preparing to handle AMBER Alerts. It's located in Eastern Pennsylvania where our own Amateur Radio Newsline's Mark Abramowicz, NT3V, is based:

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Mel Salzman, W-3-M-E-L is the force behind the Dauberville DX Association in Reading, Pennsylvania, getting connected to the AMBER Alert system.

Salzman, Dauberville's president, says he first became interested in AMBER Alert about a year ago and began searching the Internet for information. The system enables law enforcement to issue bulletins to the public about missing or abducted children.

In some states, messages are transmitted by commercial radio stations similar to an Emergency Broadcast System message. AMBER Alert also relies on highway message boards and cable-television systems to get out information.

Its goal: To enlist thousands of pairs of eyes - whether they be motorists or truckers or neighborhood and community residents - to be on the lookout for the kidnapper of a child.

Salzman says he convinced the Dauberville group to put up a "ticker" or scrolling message on the club's website - D-D-X-A dot o-r-g, to display AMBER Alert information.
Salzman also says he has his home computer hooked up to receive instant AMBER Alert notifications, paying particular attention to Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland.

Salzman says his next step in connecting the Amateur Radio service to this effort was getting clearance from the club and the blessing of the FCC to

transmit AMBER Alert information as a Q-S-T over the Dauberville group's repeaters.
"We have three repeaters," Salzman explains. "We can link all three repeaters if necessary and actually read the description, license plate number, whose been taken, what the guy looks like, whatever information comes through on my e-mail. That's what I'll put out on the air."

Salzman says the instructions are clear to any ham operator receiving the information and making a possible sighting.

"Call your local police, call 9-1-1 and give them the information," Salzman says. "If you happen to see that car or whatever description is out there, the car, what the driver looks like, call the police immediately."

Salzman says the Dauberville club has a modest, active membership, but many others in the region as well as those passing through the area use its repeaters and are supportive.

"We do have an active membership of, I would say, 20-25, and then people that they talk to," Salzman says. "You know how that could just snowballs. Like I said, the more people hear it, the more people are going to be looking, too."

Salzman says he hasn't publicized the Dauberville club's involvement with AMBER Alert. But Salzman says he's now preparing to reach out to other local clubs in the region as well as the Berks County ARES/RACES unit.

Salzman says he's also working to contact local law enforcement officials in greater Reading area to let them know ham operators are prepared to help by relaying AMBER Alert information.

So far, he says, the AMBER Alert system hasn't been activated much in this region. Salzman says that's a good thing. But, he says, the hams are ready if needed. Salzman says February's abduction and murder of 11-year-old Carlie Brucia in Sarasota, Florida affected him and others. Auto mechanic Joseph Smith is awaiting trial in connection with her death.

"I'd just like to really see this get going because it is extremely important. It just tears your heart out when you see these kids being abducted, especially with Carlie (Brucia), like when you find them and they're gone already. So, the more people involved, the better the results are going to be."

AMBER Alert was created seven years ago in memory of Amber Hagerman of Arlington, Texas. The 9-year-old was kidnapped while riding her bicycle near her home and later found murdered.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Mark Abramowicz, NT3V, in Philadelphia.

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If you want to know more about how you can involve the Amateur Radio service in your area in America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response - what AMBER stands for - take your web browser to www.missingkids.com. Then click on the words AMBER Plan. Getting a ham-radio assisted AMBER Alert plan started in your town could eventually save a child's life. (ARNewsline(tm))

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NEWSCAST CLOSE

With thanks to Alan Labs, AMSAT, the ARRL, the CGC Communicator, CQ Magazine, the FCC, the Ohio Penn DX Bulletin, Radio Netherlands, Rain, the RSGB and Australia's Q-News, that's all from the Amateur Radio Newsline(tm). Our e-mail address is newsline@arnewsline.org. More information is available at Amateur Radio Newsline's(tm) only official website located at www.arnewsline.org. You can also write to us or support us at Amateur Radio Newsline(tm), P.O. Box 660937, Arcadia, California 91066.

A reminder that the nominating period for the 2004 Amateur Radio Newsline Young Ham of the Year Award is now on. This program is open to any FCC licensed young radio amateur age 18 or younger residing in the contiguous 48 states and who has made a significant contribution to the community, the nation or ham radio though the United States Amateur Radio Service.

More information and a downloadable on-line nominating form is at our website. That’s in cyberspace at www.arnewsline.org. The cutoff for nominations this year is midnight on Tuesday, June 31st.

For now, with Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, at the editors desk, I’m Don Wilbanks. AE5DW, saying 73, a happy holiday and we thank you for listening." Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) is Copyright 2004. All rights reserved.